Unit .01

Session .03

Sin and God's Good News

Scripture

Genesis 3:1-7,14-21

1 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the
wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to
the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from
any tree in the garden'?" **2** The woman said to the
serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the
garden. **3** But about the fruit of the tree in the middle
of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch
it, or you will die.'"
4 "No! You will not die," the serpent said to the
woman. **5** "In fact, God knows that when you eat it
your eyes will be opened and you will be like God,
knowing good and evil." **6** The woman saw that the
tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and
that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took
some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her
husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the
eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they
were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made
coverings for themselves. … **14** So the Lord God said
to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are
cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild
animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the
days of your life. **15** I will put hostility between you
and the woman, and between your offspring and her
offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike
his heel. **16** He said to the woman: I will intensify
your labor pains; you will bear children with painful
effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will
rule over you. **17** And he said to the man, "Because
you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about
which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The
ground is cursed because of you. you will eat from it by
means of painful labor all the days of your life. **18** It
will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will
eat the plants of the field. **19** You will eat bread by
the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground,
since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you
will return to dust." **20** The man named his wife Eve
because she was the mother of all the living. **21** The
Lord God made clothing from skins for the man and
his wife, and he clothed them.

Intro Options

Main Point:
Sin corrupts all of creation.

Option 1

Ask students to list their favorite story/movie genres (superhero, sci-fi, romance, sports, etc.). Place students into smaller groups (or allow them to participate as individuals, depending on the size of your group). Assign each group one genre.

Say: "Some people credit Aristotle with saying that all good stories have a beginning, middle, and end. So, we will each create the basic outline of a story with a beginning, middle, and end." However, there are rules for the main character in each part of the story. The opening scene should present a character with no guilt or shame; by the middle of the "movie," the character must have fallen into shame somehow; and the ending must include some sort of resolution, a covering of the guilt and shame.

For example, maybe one story is about a talented baseball player. The athlete started using steroids. When that happened, the coach immediately cut him from the baseball team. The "movie" ends with the baseball player becoming the coach of a new MLB star.

Leaders can decide whether students will draw, act out, or simply tell their stories. When they finish, discuss the ways each of them showed the characters' resolutions' and desire for guilt and shame to be removed. Explain that this is much like the story they will see today. While all things were created good and reflected God's glory, including humanity, Adam and Eve chose to sin and brought guilt and shame on all people.

Option 2

Place students into groups of two to four. Assign the following scenario, which they must act out. The cast must include: one person as a trusted authority figure (parent, teacher, coach, military officer, etc.) and one person under that authority. The story must include the person under authority rebelling against that authority in some way, and the authority figure must respond appropriately. Allow students three minutes to prepare their skits.

As students act out their skits, note ways to make connections to the lesson. Most likely, the skits will show two levels of hurt: the act of breaking the rule (like Adam and Even directly disobeying God's command to not eat from the tree) and personal offense to the authority figure who trusted them (like the broken relationship with God that unfolded because of their sin).

TEACHING PLAN

God created humanity and placed them in a beautiful, good creation. But their paradise was lost through a single act of defiance against the Creator. In this story of paradise unraveling, the universal nature of sin was revealed, not just in Adam and Eve, but in each one of us as well.

Read Genesis 3:1-7.

The first thing to note about sin is that it begins with unbelief. The serpent launched his offensive with the words, "Did God really say?" His aim was not intended to start an argument with Eve, but to cause her to doubt God's words. Satan's questions can be read with a sneer behind it: *God said what? How absurd! Are you serious?*

- **What are some things that God has said that often gets questioned in our culture?**

Second, sin moves from unbelief to idolatry. We see idolatry in this story mainly in the way Eve looked at the forbidden fruit. She "saw that the tree was good for food" (3:6). Until that moment, God had been the only One to see and declare things good. The whole creation narrative is filled with the rhythm of "and God saw…and it was good." The moment Adam and Eve took it upon themselves to make that assessment, they ventured into idolatry. They boldly declared, "We know what's best for us," foolishly taking some created thing and elevating it to the place of God.

- **God has blessed us with good things throughout creation. What blessings are you tempted to see as more important than God?**

All of this comes down to the third aspect of sin: rebellion. At the core of Adam and Eve's sin was a question of who would be the lord of their lives. God promised that if He were in charge, then they would have goodness and blessing. Instead, the first humans decided to defy God and "remove" Him from the throne so they could sit on it.

- **Allow students to work in pairs to come up with a few answers to the following. What situations do you think you can handle without needing God's help?**

In Defense (p. 26, DDG)

Since the KJV translates Genesis 3:5 as "ye shall be as gods," both Mormons and New Age followers have interpreted this to mean that humans have the potential to become gods. In fact, the Book of Mormon says Adam needed to commit the first sin in order for humans to become gods in the next life. However, Scripture is clear when it says Satan lied in these verses, and even calls him "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). Because of their rebellion, Adam and Eve only learned the difference between good and evil. Rather than earning them godhood, death spread to all people through their decisions (Rom. 5:12,16).

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
Sin corrupts all of creation.

Genesis 3:1-7

3:1-6. Satan's attack on Adam and Eve is the same attack many of us face today, whether the voices are external or internal. The attack can come from the condescending voice of a teacher or popular comedian who talks about the absurdity of religion. Or it can come from the whispering voice in our own hearts, pulling us toward what we know to be wrong by saying, "Are you sure God has your best interest in mind?" Regardless of the circumstances, the origin is the same—Satan tempts us to doubt God is trustworthy and that His words are true.

It seems as though Eve began to doubt during her exchange with Satan. When Satan questioned Eve, she added to what God had said. God had warned Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), but He never said they couldn't touch it. Maybe Adam had exaggerated God's command when he relayed it to Eve. Or maybe Eve was giving in to Satan and was becoming resentful, hinting that God was so unreasonable that He wouldn't even allow her to touch that one tree. Whatever happened, God's words were distorted. Where God's words are distorted, unbelief naturally follows.

The apostle Paul explained how this scene mirrors the way we all glorify God's creation rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:18-25). The word for *glory* in Hebrew means *weight*. Glorifying something means we make it the most important or central thing in our lives. The problem is that we take something pitifully small—like money, romance, respect, talents, or comfort—and try to give it the weight only God has. The result is always destruction.

1:7. Satan promised Adam and Eve that their rebellion would lead to freedom. Instead, it led to shame. Previously they had been naked and unashamed, clothed in the love and acceptance of God. Now they were naked and exposed, so they did what all of us would instinctively do: They hid.

Adam and Eve's fearful desire to cover themselves is a picture of our response to sin. We sense that something is wrong, and our first impulse is to hide from God. We hide from Him by refusing to be honest about our sin, rationalizing it away, or comparing ourselves to others. We hide by blame-shifting, just as Adam and Eve did, pointing at other people or surrounding circumstances as excuses for our sin. Worst of all, we hide through religion. The fig leaves Adam and Eve sewed for themselves here the first religion, an attempt to cover our shame without a true relationship with God

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 24, DDG)

Sin as Rebellion

Because the Bible portrays people as responsible beings who are called to respond in faith and obedience to God's revelation, sin is often described in terms of defiance and rebellion toward God the King. For example, Isaiah described sin as rebellion against God: "I have raised children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me" (1:2). Seen in this light, sin is personal and willful disobedience, or like raising a clinched fist toward the One who made us.

TEACHING PLAN

Read Genesis 3:14-21.

- **Place students into four groups. Assign each group one of the following: the serpent, the woman, the man, and today's people. Then ask: What specific consequences did sin cause for each of these?**

Sin leads to relational conflict. Before God even issued punishments to Adam and Eve, sin had caused a rift between the first couple. Rather than protecting Eve from the lies of the enemy, Adam simply allowed her to fend for herself. And when God arrived, Adam blamed Eve for the whole situation.

- **Allow students to work in pairs. Tell them to choose to describe the way they see conflicts in relationships in the world, in our country, in their schools, or in their homes.**

Sin also leads to death. This was God's initial promise about the tree (Gen. 2:16-17), and God restated it in Adam and Eve's punishment. Adam and Eve might have expected to drop dead immediately after eating from the tree, but because of God's mercy, they didn't. Still, the certainty of their physical and spiritual death began that day.

By far the worst consequence of sin is a loss of the presence of God. God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden, away from His presence, and barred the entrance with a flaming sword (Gen. 3:24). The message was clear: approaching God again would mean death. It is difficult to overstate the depth of this tragedy. The One whose nearness made life so sweet—our Father, our Best Friend, our Shepherd—became distant.

- **When Adam and Eve sinned, there were a lot of consequences, but the worst was being separated from God. How can you explain this to someone?**

Activity

To illustrate this point, pretend with your students that The United States Department of Justice has written to them, explaining that the current jail system is so over-crowded and expensive that they've decided to start from scratch. The students have been hired as consultants to determine the new punishments for crimes.

Choose a few crimes and instruct students to come up with punishments for those specific crimes. Then, ask them to explain their ideas and why that punishment would be just and good.

Once students have presented their arguments, make connections between the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin and the justification of their punishments. The crimes students addressed are acts of rebellion that ignore authority, damage relationships, and result in punishment. Likewise, Adam and Eve's sin and our sin result in devastating consequences apart from the work of Jesus.

COMMENTARY

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Genesis 1:3-13

In addition to the mentioned consequences of the fall, humanity's relationship with creation was also distorted. Adam and Eve were placed in the midst of God's creation as stewards of something good. The plants, trees, flowers, and even the strongest animals of the world were under their authority. But the good world Adam and Eve were supposed to rule became an unruly environment in a single moment. Creation fell with humanity; the world became cursed against men and women. The ground, which God used to create Adam, went from being a friend to a bitter enemy. As with the previous consequences, this punishment extends to more than just farming. Our lives are now characterized by difficulty, with "thorns and thistles" in everything we do.

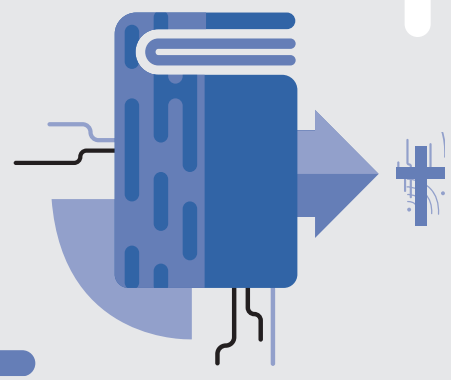
Genesis 4:1-8

If time permits, point students to the next chapter. Cain and Abel's story is filled with the far-reaching consequences of sin and what it has done to the human race. Cain and Abel are proof of the multiplying effects of sin. The relational conflict that began with Adam and Eve was passed on to the next generation. Cain and Abel should have inherited a legacy of worship from their parents; instead, Cain murdered his own brother out of jealousy. Humanity moved from unstained goodness to homicidal hatred in one generation.

It is important to note that before Cain ever acted on the evil desires in his heart, God spoke truth into his life. God's grace came before Cain's sin, offering a way out of the temptation. God takes sin seriously. He encouraged Cain to kill the sinful desire within him before it killed him. God's counsel to Cain was to reject the temptation and master the sinful desire. *Do right by ruling over sin! Don't obey its command!* While Cain heard God's counsel to flee sin's temptation, he didn't obey it. His rage gave way to sin, and when sin occupied his heart, it brought death.

(p. 25, DDG) Christ Connection

Eve's promised offspring was Jesus. The first promise of Christ in the entire Bible was recorded in Genesis 3:15. As the apostle Paul explained, Jesus was a "second version" of Adam—a truer and better Adam (Rom. 5:14). Jesus did what Adam and Eve should have done—He withstood Satan's temptation. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, ate from a tree, and died. Jesus obeyed God by willingly dying on a tree for us (Gal. 3:13). He felt the serpent's bite and the poison of the curse so we could be released from both.



SIN AND GOD'S GOOD NEWS

Genesis 3:1–7, 14–21

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JESUS CONNECTION

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LIFEWISE QUALITY

OBEDIENCE – Listening to and following through with instructions from those in authority.

HEAD

What was Satan's aim as he launched into his conversation with Eve?

How did this conversation move from doubt to rebellion against God, and what were the results?

HEART

Name examples of movies, music, influencer posts or television shows where the slogan “follow your heart” or “trust in yourself” is communicated. Is this good or bad advice? Explain.

Because of sin, no one obeys all the time. What things make it more likely for you to obey a teacher or parent? What makes it less likely? How might those same things apply to obeying God?

HANDS

Things would have ended very differently if Eve obeyed God instead of falling for Satan’s scheme. We may not be cursed when we sin, but choosing not to obey God will have consequences. Write some consequences you have experienced for disobeying.

Though we will all be tempted to disobey God, some simple practices can help us resist temptation. We can ask God to help us want to obey Him, pray before we act, read the Bible and refuse to hang out with people who encourage us to make wrong choices. Choose one of these practices (or brainstorm one of your own) and commit to doing it this week. You can even tell your LifeWise teacher for accountability.